

Your Child Has a Unilateral Hearing Loss



If your audiologist has described your child's hearing loss as unilateral you may have many questions, such as:

What is unilateral (one-ear) hearing loss?

Your child has one ear with normal hearing and one ear with a hearing loss. The degree of hearing loss can vary from mild to profound. Your child may have difficulties locating where sounds come from and understanding speech in a noisy environment, such as in a day care setting, on a playground or at family gatherings. Children with unilateral hearing loss are eligible for Early Intervention services in Massachusetts.

Will my child need hearing aids?

Talk to your audiologist about hearing aids. Some children with unilateral hearing loss use hearing aids to hear sounds or speech better; some do not. Some children benefit from other types of equipment to help them hear in group settings.

Does my child need intervention services now?

All children with hearing loss are eligible for Early Intervention services from birth until the age of three. We encourage families who have a child with hearing loss to enroll in Early Intervention as early as possible to avoid delays in speech, language and brain development. Children with unilateral hearing loss will develop more like a child with normal hearing levels if given the proper supports early. You will work with your Early Intervention provider to decide the best plan for your child and your family.

Hearing loss is now found in children at a much younger age because of newborn hearing screening. Studies have shown that the earlier children with hearing loss receive Early Intervention, the better the results. Talk to your child's audiologist and doctor or call the **Universal Newborn Hearing Screening Program** at **800-882-1435** for more information. You can also e-mail newborn.hearing@state.ma.us.

You might want to consider these tips for your child with a unilateral hearing loss:

- Connect with other parents of children with hearing loss. Ask your audiologist or Early Intervention provider if there is a parent group in your area, and consider contacting **Mass Family TIES** to be connected to another family.
- Continue to have your child's hearing tested on a regular basis, as recommended by your audiologist. The audiologist will monitor your child's hearing to make sure that it does not change.
- Seek medical attention whenever you suspect your child has an ear infection.
- Be sure to let people know it is important to have your child's attention when they talk with your child.
- Cut down or eliminate background noise, for example, television or radio, when speaking or reading to your child.
- When holding your child or walking with them, remember to have their 'better' ear facing you.
- Position your child's car seat so that their 'better' ear is facing the other people in the car.